

Gordon Parks

A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Donna Ellis



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2003

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

**Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress
Manuscript Division, 2003**

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Collection Summary

Title: Papers of Gordon Parks

Span Dates: 1946-1991

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1960-1990)

ID No.: MSS83761

Creator: Parks, Gordon, 1912-

Extent: 6,500 items; 35 containers plus 5 oversize; 14 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Photographer, writer, filmmaker, and composer. Contracts, correspondence, financial records, production material, and scripts relating to Parks's books, films, speeches, and other writings.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Names:

Parks, Gordon, 1912-

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968

Parks, Gordon, 1912- Flavio (1978)

Parks, Gordon, 1912- The learning tree (1963)

Gordon Parks Archives in the Library of Congress

Subjects:

American literature

Ballet--United States

Motion pictures, American

Photography--United States

Occupations:

Authors

Composers

Motion picture producers and directors

Photographers

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of Gordon Parks, photographer, writer, filmmaker, and composer, were transferred from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division in 1996.

Processing History:

The Gordon Parks Archives, consisting of material in several divisions in the Library of Congress, is described in *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, vol. 54, no. 16 (4 Sept. 1995).

Transfers:

The papers of Gordon Parks are part of the larger collection entitled The Gordon Parks Archives in the Library of Congress. Manuscript music, sound recordings, and videotapes removed from the papers in the Manuscript Division have been transferred to the Music and Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound divisions where they are identified as part of the Gordon Parks Archives in the Library of Congress.

Copyright Status:

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Gordon Parks in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Gordon Parks Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1912, Nov. 30	Born, Ft. Scott, Kans.
1933	Married Sally Alvis (divorced 1961)
1941	Awarded Julius Rosenwald Fellowship
1941-1944	Photographer, Farm Security Administration (later absorbed by the Office of War Information), Washington, D.C.
1944-1948	Freelance photographer, <i>Glamour</i> and <i>Vogue</i>
1948	Published <i>Camera Portraits: The Techniques and Principles of Documentary Portraiture</i> . New York: Watts
1948-1972	Photographer, <i>Life</i> magazine
1950	Photographer, <i>Life</i> magazine, Europe
1960	Named Photographer of the Year, American Society of Magazine Photographers
1961	Writer and director, <i>Flavio</i> (film)
1963	Published <i>The Learning Tree</i> . New York: Harper and Row Married Elizabeth Campbell (divorced 1973)
1966	Published <i>A Choice of Weapons</i> . New York: Harper and Row Received Notable Book Award, American Library Association, <i>A Choice of Weapons</i>
1968	Published <i>A Poet and His Camera</i> . New York: Viking Press Received Emmy Award, best television documentary, <i>Diary of a Harlem Family</i>
1969	Producer, director, and writer, <i>The Learning Tree</i> (film)
1971	Published <i>Born Black</i> . Philadelphia: Lippincott Published <i>Gordon Parks: Whispers of Intimate Things</i> . New York: Viking Press Published <i>In Love</i> . Philadelphia: Lippincott Director, <i>Shaft</i> (film)
1972	Director, <i>Shaft's Big Score</i> (film)
1973	Married Genevieve Young (divorced 1979)
1974	Director, <i>The Super Cops</i> (film)

1975	Published <i>Moments Without Proper Names</i> . New York: Viking Press
1976	Director, <i>Leadbelly</i> (film)
1978	Published <i>Flavio</i> . New York: Norton
1979	Published <i>To Smile in Autumn: A Memoir</i> . New York: Norton
1981	Published <i>Shannon</i> . Boston: Little, Brown
1984	Director, <i>Solomon Northup's Odyssey</i> (film)
1988	Producer, <i>Gordon Parks: Moments Without Proper Names</i> (film) Awarded National Medal of Arts
1989	Composer, <i>Martin</i> (ballet)
1990	Published <i>Voices in the Mirror: An Autobiography</i> . New York: Doubleday
1997	Published <i>Half Past Autumn: A Retrospective</i> . Boston: Bulfinch Press
2000	Published <i>A Star for Noon: An Homage to Women in Images, Poetry, and Music</i> . Boston: Bulfinch Press

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Gordon Parks (1912-) span the years 1946-1991, with the bulk of the material dating from 1960 to 1990.

The papers are organized in the following series: [Books](#), [Stage and Screen](#), [Other Writings](#), and a [Miscellany](#) consisting of works about Parks, general correspondence, project proposals, and printed matter.

The [Books](#) series documents Parks's writing career. Books such as *Flavio* are based on his experiences as a photojournalist for *Life* magazine. Other books such as *Moments Without Proper Names* and *Whispers of Intimate Things* combine his skills as a poet and photographer. He also produced fiction and autobiographical works. Types of production material include contracts, correspondence, drafts, financial records, mock-ups, notes, proofs, and research material.

The [Stage and Screen](#) series reflects Parks's accomplishments as a producer and director of films. The largest body of material pertains to his ballet, *Martin*, which was filmed for public television. In addition to contracts, correspondence, and scripts, production material includes set design and casting files, financial accounts, location arrangements, publicity, rehearsal and shooting schedules, and storyboards.

The [Other Writings](#) series primarily contains texts of speeches made by Parks along with related correspondence and printed matter. In addition, there are a few magazine articles written by Parks.

The [Miscellany](#) series includes biographical material, primarily magazine and newspaper articles about Parks.

Correspondence from friends and colleagues includes requests and arrangements for Parks's many public appearances as a keynote speaker and television talk show guest. Printed matter consists of articles on topics of interest to Parks.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

- [Books, 1959-1989, n.d.](#)
- [Stage and Screen, 1963-1991, n.d.](#)
- [Other Writings, 1964-1990, n.d.](#)
- [Miscellany, 1946-1990, n.d.](#)
- [Oversize, 1968-1975, n.d.](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-22	<p><u>Books, 1959-1989, n.d.</u></p> <p>Contracts, correspondence, drafts, mock-ups, and other production material relating to the publication of Park's books.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by title and therein alphabetically by type of material.</p>
BOX 22-32	<p><u>Stage and Screen, 1963-1991, n.d.</u></p> <p>Contracts, correspondence, financial records, scripts, and other production material relating to Park's films and to his ballet <i>Martin</i>.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by title and therein alphabetically by type of material.</p>
BOX 32-33	<p><u>Other Writings, 1964-1990, n.d.</u></p> <p>Magazine articles written by Parks and texts of his speeches along with related material.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX 33-35	<p><u>Miscellany, 1946-1990, n.d.</u></p> <p>Contracts, general correspondence, magazine and newspaper articles about Parks, music copyrights and royalty statements, notes, project proposals, and printed matter.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX OV 1-OV 5	<p><u>Oversize, 1968-1975, n.d.</u></p> <p>Jacket designs, mock-ups, and page proofs relating to Parks's books as well as set designs and storyboards pertaining to his films.</p> <p>Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.</p>

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-22	<p>Books, 1959-1989, n.d.</p> <p>Contracts, correspondence, drafts, mock-ups, and other production material relating to the publication of Park's books.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by title and therein alphabetically by type of material.</p>
BOX 1	<p><i>Born Black</i></p> <p>Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1967-1981, n.d.</p> <p>Typescript, 1970</p> <p><i>A Choice of Weapons</i></p> <p>Correspondence, 1965-1969, 1977, 1989</p> <p>Drafts, n.d.</p> <p>Excerpts, n.d.</p> <p>Galley proofs, 1965</p> <p>Miscellany, 1967-1968, 1986</p> <p>Notes, 1965-1969</p> <p>Screenplay by Gilbert Moore, 1970</p>
BOX 2	<p>Typescript</p> <p>Complete, n.d.</p> <p>Miscellaneous chapters, n.d.</p> <p><i>Fashion Photography</i>, n.d.</p> <p><i>Flavio</i></p> <p>Contracts, 1961-1963, 1975-1976</p> <p>Correspondence, 1961-1978, n.d. (3 folders)</p> <p>Drafts</p>

Books, 1959-1989, n.d.

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
	1968
BOX 3	1976
	1977
	Mar. (2 folders)
BOX 4	June (2 folders)
	Undated (3 folders)
	Financial records, 1977-1984, n.d.
	Layout designs, n.d.
BOX 5	Magazine and newspaper articles, 1960-1966, 1974 (4 folders)
	Notes, 1968-1977, n.d.
	Proofs
	Blueprints, 1978
	Page proofs, 1977, n.d. (3 folders)
BOX 6	<i>Reader's Digest</i> , 1977-1979
	Research material, 1961-1963, n.d. (2 folders)
	Typescript, n.d.
	<i>In Love</i>
	Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1970-1980, n.d.
	Mock-ups, 1971 <i>See Oversize</i>
	Unbound book signatures, 1971
	<i>The Learning Tree</i>
	Correspondence, 1963-1973

Books, 1959-1989, n.d.

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 7	Drafts, n.d. (7 folders)
BOX 8	Galley proofs, 1963 Notes, n.d. Royalty statements, 1968 Malcolm X, research material, 1959-1963, n.d. (2 folders) <i>Moments Without Proper Names</i> Book jackets, 1975 <i>See Oversize</i> Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1972-1981, n.d. <i>See also Oversize</i> Mock-ups, n.d. <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX 9	Page proofs, 1975 <i>A Poet and His Camera</i> Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1968-1969 Mock-ups, n.d. Notes, 1968 <i>Shannon</i> Correspondence, 1979-1981, n.d. Drafts, n.d. (3 folders)
BOX 10	(6 folders)
BOX 11	(2 folders) Galley proofs, 1981
BOX 12	Notes, n.d. (2 folders) Research material, 1972-1978, n.d. Typescripts Bound, n.d.

Books, 1959-1989, n.d.

Container* *Contents

	pp. 1-361 (2 folders)
BOX 13	pp. 362-634 (2 folders)
	Miscellaneous pages, n.d. (2 folders)
BOX 14	Unbound
	Set I, n.d. (5 folders)
	Set II, n.d.
	pp. 1-140
BOX 15	pp. 141-554 (3 folders)
	Set III, n.d. (3 folders)
BOX 16	Sets IV-VI, n.d. (5 folders)
BOX 17	<i>Silence</i>
	Correspondence and notes, 1972, n.d.
	Drafts, n.d.
	<i>To Smile in Autumn</i>
	Contract, 1977
	Correspondence and notes, 1978-1988, n.d.
	List of illustrations, 1979
	Mock-ups, n.d. <u><i>See Oversize</i></u>
	Proof sheets, 1979 (3 folders)
BOX 18	Typescripts
	Set I, 1979

Books, 1959-1989, n.d.

Container

Contents

	Set II, 1979
	pp. 1-300 (2 folders)
BOX 19	pp. 301-456
	Sets III-IV, n.d. (2 folders)
	<i>A Voice in the Air</i> , n.d.
	<i>Voices in the Mirror</i>
	Correspondence and printed matter, 1987-1989, n.d.
BOX 20	Drafts
	1987-1988
	Undated (5 folders)
BOX 21	(1 folder)
	Notes, 1975-1989, n.d.
	Typescripts
	Sets I-II, 1988 (2 folders)
BOX 22	Sets III-V, 1989, n.d. (3 folders)
	<i>Whispers of Intimate Things</i> , mock-ups, 1971 (2 folders)
BOX 22-32	Stage and Screen, 1963-1991, n.d. Contracts, correspondence, financial records, scripts, and other production material relating to Park's films and to his ballet <i>Martin</i> . Arranged alphabetically by title and therein alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 22	<i>Eagle in the Air</i> , script, n.d.
	<i>An Endless Silence</i> , script, 1972
BOX 23	<i>Leadbelly</i>
	Budget, 1973-1974

Stage and Screen, 1963-1991, n.d.

Container

Contents

Casting, 1974, n.d.

Contract, 1973

Miscellany, 1974-1975, n.d.

Publicity, 1975-1979, n.d.

Research material, 1974, n.d.

Schedules

Call sheets, 1974

Shooting and post production, 1974-1975

Scripts

Dialogue script, 1975

BOX 24

Screenplay by Ernest Kinoy, 1974

Set design, n.d.

The Learning Tree

Contracts, 1963-1968

Correspondence, 1963-1969, 1989, n.d.
(4 folders)

Financial records, 1963-1971, n.d.

Location arrangements, 1968-1969, n.d.

BOX 25

Music, 1966-1985, n.d.

Publicity, 1968-1969, n.d.

Scripts

Drafts, 1968, n.d.
(2 folders)

Film editing, n.d.

Final, 1968

Treatment, n.d.

Stage and Screen, 1963-1991, n.d.

Container

Contents

	Set design, 1968, n.d. <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX 26	Shooting schedules, 1968
	Storyboard, n.d.
	<i>Martin</i>
	Cast and crew
	Choreographer, 1987-1989, n.d.
	Dance companies, 1989, n.d.
	Dancers, 1989, n.d.
	Lists, 1989
	Miscellany, n.d.
	Photography, 1989
	Correspondence
	1986-1987
BOX 27	1988-1991, n.d. (5 folders)
	Financial records
	Budget, 1986-1990, n.d.
	Fund-raising, 1986-1989, n.d.
	Invoices and purchase orders, 1986-1991, n.d.
	Miscellany, 1989, n.d.
	Statements, 1988-1989
BOX 28	Legal papers
	Contracts
	Children, 1989
	Choreographer, 1987-1989, n.d.

Stage and Screen, 1963-1991, n.d.

Container

Contents

Community Television of Southern California (KCET), 1989

Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1988-1989

Crew, 1989, n.d.

Dancers, 1989

Director, 1987-1989, n.d.

Feature titles and credits, 1989

Miscellany, 1989, n.d.

Public Television International, 1991

Copyrights, 1986-1990

Insurance, 1989-1991

Permits, 1989

Release forms, 1989

Miscellany, 1987-1989, n.d.

Music, n.d.

BOX 29

Notes, n.d.

Production reports, 1989

Proposal, 1986-1989, n.d.

Publicity

Brochures, 1989

Interviews, 1989-1990

Newspaper and magazine clippings, 1986-1990, n.d.

Press kit, n.d.

Preview, 1989, n.d.

Screenings, 1989-1990, n.d.

Research material, 1986-1989, n.d.

Stage and Screen, 1963-1991, n.d.

Container

Contents

Schedules

Calendar, 1989

Call sheets, 1989

Rehearsals, 1989

Shooting schedule, 1989

BOX 30

Time sheets, 1989

Scripts, 1986, n.d.

Storyboard, n.d. *See also Oversize*

Moments Without Proper Names

Contracts and correspondence, 1983-1988

Drafts, n.d.

Notes, n.d.

Script, n.d.

Shaft

Contracts, 1971

Financial records, 1986-1987

Newspaper clippings, 1971

Preview, 1971

Script, 1970-1971

Shaft's Big Score, contract, 1971-1972

BOX 31

Solomon Northup's Odyssey

Cast, n.d.

Contracts and correspondence, 1982-1983, n.d.

Notes, n.d.

Schedules, 1983

Stage and Screen, 1963-1991, n.d.

Container

Contents

Scripts

Screenplays

By Lou Potter, 1983
(2 folders)

Revised, 1983

BOX 32 Shooting script, n.d.

Treatment, n.d.

The Super Cops, contract, 1973

BOX 32-33 **Other Writings, 1964-1990, n.d.**

Magazine articles written by Parks and texts of his speeches along with related material.
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically.

BOX 32 Articles, 1970-1975, 1984, 1990
(3 folders)

Speech file

1964-1985
(10 folders)

BOX 33 1988, n.d.
(2 folders)

BOX 33-35 **Miscellany, 1946-1990, n.d.**

Contracts, general correspondence, magazine and newspaper articles about Parks, music
copyrights and royalty statements, notes, project proposals, and printed matter.
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically.

BOX 33 Appointment book, 1982

Audience magazine, 1969

Biographical material, 1965-1990, n.d.
(5 folders)

Contracts, 1966-1973

Copyrights and permissions, 1968-1970, 1985

Correspondence

1965-1968

Miscellany, 1946-1990, n.d.

Container* *Contents

BOX 34	1969-1990, n.d. (4 folders)
	Guest appearances
	1946, 1962-1985 (5 folders)
BOX 35	1986-1988, n.d. (3 folders)
	Harper and Row Publishers, 1968-1969
	<i>Life</i> magazine, 1966-1979, n.d.
	Music royalty statements, 1971-1987
	Notes, 1983, n.d.
	Printed matter, 1953, 1962-1985, n.d. (2 folders)
	Projects, 1968-1974, n.d.
BOX OV 1-OV 5	Upsize, 1968-1975, n.d. Jacket designs, mock-ups, and page proofs relating to Parks's books as well as set designs and storyboards pertaining to his films. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Books
	<i>In Love</i>
	Mock-ups, 1971 (Container 6)
	<i>Moments Without Proper Names</i>
	Book jackets, 1975 (Container 8)
	Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements
	Page proofs, 1975 (Container 8)
BOX OV 2	Mock-ups, n.d. (Container 8)
BOX OV 3	<i>To Smile in Autumn</i>
	Mock-ups, n.d. (Container 17)

Oversize, 1968-1975, n.d.

Container

Contents

BOX OV 4

Stage and Screen

The Learning Tree

Set Design

Blueprints, 1968 ([Container 25](#))

BOX OV 5

Martin

Storyboard, n.d. ([Container 30](#))